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YOU DON'T SAY...

"See you all for Bloody Marys on Sunday."

Mecklenburg County commissioners, on their unanimous vote to allow alcohol sales before noon on Sunday in unincorporated parts of that county.

THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 7/11/17

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News Summary

Coal Ash

As Duke Energy continues a state-ordered cleanup of millions of tons of potentially toxic coal ash, an Ohio company won approval Tuesday to store even more ash imported from India in North Carolina. North Carolina seems already awash in coal ash, which burst into public view with a 2014 spill into the Dan River.

The state ordered Duke to close dozens of storage basins in which the bulk of its 155 million tons of ash is stored, but the company wants customers to pay for the work. Duke expects ash cleanup in the Carolinas to ultimately cost \$5.1 billion. A request last month for a 14.9 percent rate hike, filed by one of Duke's two N.C. utilities, included partial costs of closing basins at eight power

plants. The second utility, which serves Charlotte, expects to seek a rate increase this fall that will also include closure costs.

Metals in ash, such as arsenic, can contaminate groundwater and threaten the health of people who drink it. Duke is working, under a legislative mandate, to run water lines or offer filtration systems to neighborhoods near its coal-burning power plants.

Lightweight fly ash is also a coveted ingredient in making concrete, a more durable replacement for Portland cement at half the cost. But North Carolina concrete producers say they can't get enough ash.

After years of complaints, state legislators ordered Duke to build three facilities that would process ash into a form that could be used in concrete. Last month Duke announced the last of those facilities, which will be built at power plants in Salisbury, Goldsboro and Moncure.

State law requires the three facilities, which will start operating in 2019 to 2020, to process 900,000 tons of ash a year from Duke's basins. The Charlotte-based Carolinas Ready Mixed Concrete Association estimates North Carolina concrete makers needed about 959,000 tons last year, far more than they got. The move away from coal as a fuel by Duke and other power companies has only increased demand for ash, said association executive vice president Caroline Sutton. Concrete makers in South Carolina and Virginia also can't get enough ash, she said. "We want North Carolina bridges, roads and structures to be built with N.C.-produced fly ash," Sutton said. "Importing fly ash from outside the state and overseas makes no sense when we have an abundance of coal ash that can be reprocessed right here in North Carolina."

Duke spokeswoman Erin Culbert said processing and transportation costs play roles in how it markets ash. Federal standards that require cleaner air emissions from its power plants can also make ash less usable in concrete, she said. The 35 percent of ash Duke recycles each year, combined with the output of the three new processing plants, will likely exceed the amount of new ash Duke produces within three years, Culbert said.

Catawba Riverkeeper Sam Perkins said Duke's plan to leave ash in basins at six power plants, drained of water and capped, risks the health of nearby residents and wastes productive use of the ash. "When we're talking about new contracts to bring in coal ash from halfway around the world, I think it's clear that we have unmet demand for the coal ash that's still here," Perkins said. The ash that Duke plans to leave in place at the Allen power plant in Gaston County, he said, could instead be used in concrete for upcoming construction projects in the area.

Concrete also figure into the plans of an Ohio company, Spartan Materials LLC. The Council of State on Tuesday approved a two-year warehouse lease with Spartan to store 150,000 tons of fly ash imported from India at the state port in Morehead City. Spartan officials couldn't be reached Tuesday, but a North Carolina Ports official said the ash will go to concrete plants.

Spartan has right of first refusal, the official said, for a long-term lease of two acres at the port if it decides to build a bulk operation that could store 200,000 tons of ash a year.

North Carolina is not the first state to face the irony of importing coal ash as it grapples with disposing of the industrial waste. (Bruce Henderson, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Litigation Ban

Conservatives unhappy with the work of a civil rights center at the University of North Carolina say a ban on litigation is meant to apply only to the center while sparing legal clinics.

A revised version of the ban makes that distinction clear, said attorney Steve Long, a member of the board overseeing the 16-campus university system who has pushed for the ban. "It doesn't really change anything except we made express the fact that it does not apply to law clinics," he said in a telephone interview Tuesday. "It never did. And opponents were trying to make it sound like it did."

Ted Shaw, director of UNC Center for Civil Rights in Chapel Hill, had a different take on the purpose of the revision. He said the purpose was to make clear that the actual target is the center. "It just points to what drives all of this," Shaw said. "It was hard for me to read that memo without my blood boiling, but I did."

Long sent the revised proposal Saturday to the some members of the Board of Governors and the education committee. At a public meeting in May, opponents of the ban said it would hurt not only the civil rights center but also law school clinics at UNC-CH and at N.C. Central University in Durham, a historically black school. Supporters of the ban say the center's work isn't in line with

the school's educational mission and that a public university shouldn't sue governmental entities. The Center for Civil Rights was founded in 2001 by noted civil rights attorney Julius Chambers, an African-American whose home, office and car were bombed as he pursued school desegregation cases in the 1960s and 1970s. It has taken on cases involving school segregation, equal education rights and a landfill in a poor community.

The education committee is scheduled to hold a special meeting Aug. 1 to vote on the ban. But a vote held Tuesday on the revised ban failed. Those on the call said it failed because the majority preferred not diverging from the plan to vote next month.

Committee member Marty Kotis of Greensboro, who made the motion to approve the revised ban, said he thought it would be more efficient for the panel to vote Tuesday rather than wait a couple of weeks.

Board chairman Louis Bissette said he's not sure whether he supports the ban. A spokesman for UNC President Margaret Spellings didn't return a message asking if she supports the ban. The full board would likely vote on the ban at its September meeting if the committee approves it.

Shaw said he and the center staff plan to fight to the end. "They have the power, but not the right," to limit the center's work, he said. (Martha Waggoner, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/11/17).

Fiscal Ranking

North Carolina improved in this year ranking of states' "fiscal condition" produced by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. The state's government ranks 15th in the country for its level of debt and other liabilities, such as unfunded pensions, up from 21st in the country last year. One of the state's biggest improvements came in the "cash solvency" category, which measures if a state has "enough cash on hand to cover its short-term bills." North Carolina moved up eight spots in that category to 29th. The state moved up nine spots to eighth place in "long-run solvency," which measures how well a state can handle long-term spending commitments.

North Carolina ranked fifth in the "budget solvency" category -- which measures how well a state can afford its fiscal year spending with current revenues. Senate leader Phil Berger's office sent out a news release Tuesday touting the report. "While some on the other side of the aisle are doing everything they can to discredit our conservative budgeting approach of spending restraint and middle-class tax relief, the data speaks for itself," Berger said in the news release. "While most other states are struggling with revenue shortfalls, North Carolina is among the top five states in the nation for budget solvency."

The news release came one day after a report from the legislature's nonpartisan staff found that tax cuts in the new state budget could contribute to a \$1 billion-plus annual gap between revenues and projected government expenses by 2020. While the Mercatus Center report was released Tuesday, it is based on financial data for fiscal year 2015. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 7/12/17).

Domestic Violence Law

Previously convicted domestic violence offenders who are accused of killing their victims could more easily be found guilty of first-degree murder and possibly face the ultimate punishment under a new law in North Carolina. On Tuesday, Gov. Roy Cooper signed "Britny's Law," which creates the presumption that a homicide constitutes the most serious crime if the slaying was committed with malice against a current or former lover, and the defendant has been convicted before of domestic violence, stalking or similar crimes against the victim.

If such conditions are met, then "there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the murder is a willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing," according to the new legislation, named for Britny Puryear, a 22-year-old who was found shot to death in her Fuquay-Varina home in 2014. Her boyfriend and father of her then-infant son, Logan Connail McLean, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and is serving time in prison.

"Domestic violence is a crime that destroys families and lives," said Cooper, who was joined by Puryear's family at the bill signing. "Too often domestic violence killers escape full justice, because prosecutors struggle to convince juries that these offenders' crimes meet the definition of first-degree murder under current law. We must keep working to ensure those who commit the crime of domestic violence face the justice they deserve."

Puryear's family worked with state legislators and others in the domestic violence prevention community to get the law passed. "If Britny's law helps one family not lose a loved one, and makes sure that one murderer never gets out, then all of our time and efforts are worth it," said Stephen Puryear, Britny's father.

First-degree murder is punishable by the death penalty or life in prison without parole.

Cooper also signed a measure to allow domestic violence protective orders granted by a judge to fully go into effect even when they are under appeal.

The General Assembly left more than 110 bills on Cooper's desk when its work session ended June 30. The governor has until the end of July to sign bills, veto them or let them become law without his signature. Lawmakers have already scheduled a veto-override session for Aug. 3. (Christina Sandidge, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/11/17).

Mental Health Funding

Just hours after the final gavel fell on the North Carolina General Assembly's long work session on June 30, an email landed in the boxes of reporters: Alliance Behavioral Healthcare announced it was cutting back on vital mental health services it had promised to create in Wake County and other parts of the Triangle. The cuts came as the agency rethought plans in light of tens of millions of dollars in state appropriations being cut from the budget of Alliance and North Carolina's six other state-funded mental health management organizations.

The organizations, known as LME-MCOs, manage the allocation of mental health services across North Carolina. The dollars cut by lawmakers are "single stream" funds, intended to cover the costs of uninsured people who need mental and behavioral health care and are unable to pay.

"Coupled with \$262 million in Single-Stream Funding cuts over the past two years, these new cuts force Alliance to scale back and even eliminate components of our comprehensive plan to reinvest \$43 million over a three-year period to meet the pressing needs of our communities," read a community bulletin distributed by the agency.

All told, the LME-MCOs lost more than \$86 million in budgeted funds this year and another \$90 million in fiscal year 2018-19.

"This is the critical State funding that supports uninsured and underinsured North Carolinians," the notice read. "It is important to understand that these cuts have tangible consequences to the health of many of the most vulnerable citizens living in Durham, Wake, Cumberland and Johnston counties."

Alliance is the only of the state's seven LME-MCOs to make a public announcement about cuts to services, but, when contacted, other agencies admitted to taking a hard look at their plans in the wake of the General Assembly's budget.

A spokesman for the Sandhills Center, which serves nine counties in the Sandhills region said his agency had no planned cuts and that reserves were sufficient to continue service at current levels. But he noted, "the reductions will likely limit the funding available to expand service capacity or add additional service options at this time."

Vaya Health, which serves the 23 westernmost counties in the state has already reorganized and laid off staff as of July 1, wrote spokeswoman Rachel Leonard-Spencer. "The budget mandates that all MCOs continue to offer the 2015 level of state-funded services, despite dramatically cutting funding to support those services," she wrote. "Moving forward, Vaya will only be able to maintain services at the 2015 level." She noted that unlike Medicaid services, non-Medicaid services are not an entitlement and are dependent on state dollars. And Leonard-Spencer noted that over the past two years, Vaya's board allocated \$21 million in savings on Medicaid dollars to make up the costs of caring for the uninsured. (Rose Hoban, NC HEALTH NEWS, 7/11/17).

Aquarium Proposal

North Carolina could get a new aquarium facility in Pender County under a provision tucked into the state budget. Page 274 of the budget directs the N.C. Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, which oversees the state's aquariums, to begin planning for a "satellite aquarium" in Scotts Hill, a community outside of Wilmington along U.S. 17.

A spokesman for the agency said he had little information about the project, which wasn't something the agency requested in this year's budget. Rep. Chris Millis, R-Pender, worked on the

provision and said the goal is to create a partnership between UNC-Wilmington and the state's aquariums to open a new exhibit featuring shellfish aquaculture.

Millis explained in an email that the state agency would "work in coordination with the knowledge base of UNCW's Center for Marine Science to bring out to the public view the operation of a shellfish aquaculture facility and its importance to the coastal areas of southeastern North Carolina. ... UNCW's Center for Marine Science is an amazing facility and does great work relative to shellfish aquaculture ... which can be seen by those who have the opportunity to view the facility."

The budget provision lists the specific location where the aquarium facility would be built: Blake Farms, a 1,300-acre mixed-use development led by Wilmington developer Raiford Trask. Millis said the location was named because state officials have been discussing the project with the property owner, but "once the concept moves from a planning stage there is nothing preventing alternative locations from consideration." Millis said he's not sure when the project might be ready to start construction.

The state budget had included \$300,000 for the planning efforts, but that amount was deleted in the budget technical corrections bill, which means DCNR will likely need to cover any costs from its operating budget. North Carolina currently has four aquariums, in New Hanover County at Fort Fisher, Pine Knoll Shores, Manteo and Nags Head.(Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 7/12/17).

NAACP Challenges

The North Carolina NAACP wants an outside authority -- and not the General Assembly -- to redraw legislative maps and state lawmakers barred from passing laws until a special election is held. Attorneys for the civil rights group asked a Greensboro federal court Tuesday to consider the requests in its deliberations about when redistricting should occur, even though the NAACP isn't formally in a lawsuit. A three-judge panel is weighing how to proceed after the U.S. Supreme Court last month upheld the judges' earlier ruling throwing out 28 House and Senate districts as racial gerrymanders. The NAACP says a special master should be ordered to redraw lawful maps and elections held under those boundaries this year. The group argues the current Republican-dominated legislature can't be trusted to pass constitutional laws.

Meanwhile, NC NAACP President William Barber and other protesters are challenging the orders banning them from entering the N.C. Legislative Building. A hearing is scheduled for Wednesday morning in Wake County. Barber and 31 other protesters were arrested May 30 at the Legislative Building during a sit-in demonstration over health care after they refused to clear the hallways. The ban was a condition of the protesters' release from jail. They were charged with second-degree trespassing. Because of the ban, Barber said in June he wasn't able to join NAACP activists who sought to deliver letters to legislators about redrawing election district boundaries, including some who were threatened with arrest inside the building that day.(Lynn Bonner, THE NEWS & OBSERVER and THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/11/17).

Revenge Porn

North Carolina has expanded protections against "revenge porn" in a law Gov. Roy Cooper signed on Tuesday. In 2015, the state made it illegal to post nude photos online without the consent of the victim after a personal relationship ends. House Bill 399 broadens protection by eliminating the reference to personal relationships.

The new law now includes live transmissions such as online streaming as prohibited images. It also clarifies that obtaining a prohibited image under private circumstances, not just disclosing it, is illegal. And it would amend the "reasonable expectation of privacy" standard to say "the depicted person expected the images to remain private."

Rep. Chris Malone, R-Wake, was the key sponsor of the bill.(Craig Jarvis, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Alcohol Votes

Chapel Hill joined Carrboro and Raleigh in allowing Sunday morning alcohol sales following a discussion Monday that lasted less than nine minutes. The Town Council vote was unanimous. "I think it's important that, given as Carrboro passed this already, then we want to be able to pass this in Chapel Hill before people get into a tradition of going to Carrboro for their Sunday brunch,

because we do have some options in Chapel Hill," council member Nancy Oates said. "And we would like to make sure we start a tradition in Chapel Hill." The council stopped short, however, of allowing local stores to sell alcohol before noon. That discussion will be held in September so the Campus and Community Coalition to Reduce the Negative Impacts of High Risk Drinking can weigh in.

In Western North Carolina, Banner Elk became the first High Country municipality to allow 10 a.m. Sunday alcohol sales, as the town council voted 4-0, with Councilman Robert E. Tufts absent, to pass the ordinance on July 10. "This would definitely benefit the business community," Town Manager Rick Owen said. Councilman Mike Dunn, a business owner himself, spoke of how the former law barring Sunday alcohol sales until noon was a hindrance for customers. No council members or audience members spoke in opposition to the ordinance.

Also Tuesday, Huntersville became the first Mecklenburg County town to allow alcohol sales beginning at 10 a.m. on Sundays. The Huntersville Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the measure at a special meeting on Tuesday afternoon. The earlier Sunday sales apply to any establishment with an ABC permit in Huntersville. "Enjoy your Sunday mornings," Mayor John Aneralla said to laughter from the audience. "I don't know if the churches will be happy with that, but Huntersville is the first in Mecklenburg."

Later, Mecklenburg County commissioners also voted unanimously to allow alcohol sales before noon on Sunday in unincorporated parts of Mecklenburg County.

Wrightsville Beach also passed a 10 a.m. alcohol sales ordinance this week. (Tammy Grubb, THE DURHAM HERALD-SUN, Joe Marusak, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, and Thomas Sherrill, THE WATAUGA DEMOCRAT, 7/11/17).

Marine Crash

Six Marines and a Navy sailor from Camp Lejeune were among the 16 service members killed Monday when their plane crashed in a field in rural Mississippi while on their way to routine training. The Marine KC-130 transport aircraft went down in LeFlore County, Miss., while moving the seven from Camp Lejeune and their equipment for pre-deployment training in Arizona, according to a statement from the Corps' Special Operations Command. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire MARSOC family at this time," the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command said in a statement. "The incredible demands of this dangerous and demanding calling forge some of the tightest unit and family bonds found in the U.S. military. This loss impacts us all."

The flight originated from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point near Havelock, N.C., as the squadron was transporting personnel and equipment from there to Naval Air Field El Centro in California, the Marine Corps said in a press release. The crew and passengers consisted of 15 Marines and one Navy corpsman. Names of those killed were being withheld pending notification of their families. (Josh Shaffer and Charles Duncan, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

First Lady

Six months after moving into the Executive Mansion with her husband, Gov. Roy Cooper, Kristin Cooper says she is working hard to make her own mark on North Carolina. She already has visited 20 of the state's 100 counties and says she plans to visit the rest before the governor's first term is up in 2020. "When you get down to everyday basics, people are very much the same. They care about their families. They care about their elderly parents and their kids and paying for college and their dogs," she said.

Kristin Cooper has served for 14 years as a guardian ad litem, representing children in foster care in the state court system. She said she hopes to use her experience and passion to try to help find solutions to childhood poverty, hunger, literacy and abuse. "You start at birth building healthy, functional human beings, and you have healthy, functional citizens and a healthy, functioning state," she said.

The Coopers have been married for 25 years, and their three adult daughters all grew up in politics. So, Roy Cooper's campaign for governor last year after 16 years as attorney general was a family decision. "Roy would not have done this step if all of us weren't on board," Kristin Cooper said. "The first people that he asked, the first person he asked was me, and I said, 'Yes, I think it's a great idea.'" (Debra Morgan, WRAL NEWS, 7/11/17).

Good Driving

Raleigh, Greensboro and Winston-Salem are among the top 10 best cities to drive in. Using data for gas prices, annual hours of traffic delays, auto-repair shops per capita, repair costs, parking rates, accident likelihood and more, personal finance website WalletHub studied the 100 largest cities in America to determine which ones are the least painful to drive in. Greensboro was the top-ranked North Carolina city, coming in at No. 3, followed by Winston-Salem at No. 7 and Raleigh at No. 10.

Greensboro was ranked first in the U.S. for lowest annual hours spent in congestion per driver. It also came in at No. 3 for lowest auto maintenance costs. Winston-Salem was No. 1 in the country for lowest parking rates. Greensboro was No. 4. Raleigh didn't make the top 5 for any individual ranking.

The top 10 in order were: Corpus Christi, Texas; Gilbert, AZ; Greensboro; Mesa, AZ; El Paso, Texas; Laredo, Texas; Winston-Salem; Plano, Texas; Scottsdale, AZ; and Raleigh. (Abbie Bennett, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Hired

Chris Mackey, who served as press secretary under Gov. Bev Perdue, is back in state government. Mackey was hired in June to serve as communications director for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. After serving in the Perdue administration, Mackey worked as a spokeswoman for Greenville-based Vidant Health. Her new salary is \$120,000. (THE INSIDER, 7/11/17).

Drone Use

People will be able to use drones or other remote-controlled aerial vehicles in only seven of the Raleigh's nearly 90 public parks under a proposed ordinance. Pilots would still need to share those spaces with other park patrons and must adhere to operating regulations -- many of which are already in place by the Federal Aviation Administration -- such as not flying higher than 400 feet off the ground or not operating outside the pilot's line of sight.

The move comes at a time when the number of drone pilots in the Triangle continues to skyrocket. As of February, there were nearly 5,000 Triangle fliers registered with the FAA. And local parks are popular places for drones to take flight.

Scott Payne, assistant director for Raleigh's parks, recreation and cultural resources department, said the city wanted to find fields and other spaces that were large enough to allow the hobby. "It felt like the right time to put our arms around it and find where are the best locations in our system where we could allow it to happen," he said.

Unmanned aerial vehicles also would not be allowed in nature preserves, nature parks, wetland centers or lakes owned, managed or leased by the city if the proposal is approved. That includes Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve in North Raleigh, where some drone pilots fly. "We're trying to encourage restorations of some bird species that are nesters in these big fields," Payne said. "So there are concerns they would be scared away because of people flying, so we just don't feel like it's the best fit for a nature preserve." (Kathryn Trogon, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Pharma Growth

Neither hurricanes nor floods have thrown off major expansion work ongoing at a home-grown pharmaceutical operation purchased in 2012 by an Australian company. A 126,000-square-foot production facility north of Greenville is scheduled for completion in December and full operation in 2018, Joe Cascone, Mayne's vice president of operations told The Daily Reflector during a visit to the plant and a second 36,000-square-foot administrative building also underway.

Started in October 2015 next to the Sugg Parkway Metrics facility purchased by Mayne Pharma five years ago, the work represents a \$80 million investment and an addition of more than 100 science and technology jobs to its base of 350 workers, Cascone said. "We've committed to add another 110 scientists, quality assurance specialists and other technicians to support expanded operations when we complete the current expansion project," Cascone said. "That's a conservative estimate." (Michael Abramowitz, THE (Greenville) DAILY REFLECTOR, 7/11/17).

Running

John Odom wants his old seat on the Raleigh City Council back. Odom, 70, plans to run for Raleigh City Council in District B, a seat he lost to David Cox in 2015 by fewer than 300 votes. He said he plans to file for the seat at 10 a.m. Wednesday. Odom held the seat for 16 years before losing to Cox. On Tuesday, Odom described Cox as a "no-growther" who's not listening to the needs of all residents.

Cox, a politically unaffiliated computer scientist, won in 2015 in part because some residents viewed Odom as too friendly with developers. On Tuesday, Odom said he left the Republican Party to become an unaffiliated voter. Odom ran as a Republican for City Council and last year for the Wake County Board of Commissioners, when he lost to Democrat Greg Ford. (Paul A. Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Border Wall

U.S. Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, chairman of an influential bloc of conservatives in the U.S. House, said there are enough votes to stop any budget bill that does not include funding for President Donald Trump's promised wall along the southern border. Congress is expected to begin budget talks later this summer. Without an agreement, the government could shut down on Oct. 1.

The border wall was one of Trump's signature campaign promises. He promised during the campaign that Mexico would pay for the wall, but his first budget proposal as president included more than \$1 billion for construction of the wall. "Without a doubt there is enough conservative members who will not support any funding mechanism that does not include border wall funding," Meadows told Breitbart News in a phone interview Monday.

Meadows, a Republican who represents North Carolina's 11th District in the far western part of the state, leads the House Freedom Caucus. He also told Breitbart that "my conversations with the president have led me to believe that there is nothing less than a full and total commitment on his part to only sign into law a funding bill that actually allows for us to start construction of a border wall on our southern border."

Meadows is not the first House member to raise the possibility of shutting down the government if funding for the wall is not included in the budget. Rep. Mo Brooks of Alabama -- who is running for Senate in a special election to fill Attorney General Jeff Sessions' seat -- promised in a campaign ad to "fight every spending bill that doesn't fund that wall and if I have to filibuster on the Senate floor, I'll even read the King James Bible until the wall is funded."

Several lawmakers, including prominent Republicans, pronounced Trump's proposed budget "dead on arrival" after it was released, citing a host of concerns with the administration's funding proposals. (Brian Murphy, MCCLATCHYDC, 7/11/17).

Hospital Bankruptcy

Morehead Memorial Hospital's Board of Trustees on Monday filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Ongoing financial pressures and the difficult past decade for the healthcare industry -- especially for small, community hospitals -- were cited by the board in a news release issued this morning.

The Eden hospital's employees were notified early this morning about the board's action, and were assured that Morehead's doors will stay open and their jobs will continue. No lay-offs are expected due to the filing, and Morehead's leadership team plans to remain in place, according to the news release. The facility employs 657, and has more than 80 contract employees.

This move will allow the hospital to restructure its debt in order to reach financial stability and ensure its long-term success. The reorganization strengthens Morehead's potential to find a strategic partner.

Morehead will continue to operate and patients should not notice a change during the petition process. "Reorganization will allow Morehead Hospital the opportunity to align its operations strategically to meet the healthcare needs of our community," said Eugene Russell, chairman of Morehead's Board of Trustees. (GREENSBORO NEWS & RECORD, 7/11/17).

Fayetteville Mayor

Fayetteville Mayor Pro Tem Mitch Colvin said today that he is planning to run for mayor. Colvin, who said he plans to make an official announcement this week, will be the second member of the City Council to challenge Mayor Nat Robertson. Kirk deViere announced June 29 that he would

seek the office. Robertson announced in April that he would seek a third term. He and deViere filed for office Friday. Colvin said he didn't consider Robertson and deViere as a factor in his decision. "I'm not running against Nat or Kirk, because I respect them both immensely," Colvin said. "I'm running for the office."

A fourth candidate, Quancidine Hinson Gribble, filed Monday to run for mayor. She is seeking office for the first time.

Since the race has more than two candidates, a primary will be held Oct. 10. The two candidates with the most votes in the primary will face off in the municipal elections Nov. 7.(Steve DeVane, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Kannapolis Incentives

The Kannapolis City Council on Monday approved a tax incentives deal with an Atlanta-based developer that plans to bring hundreds of jobs to a site on Macedonia Church Road. The council approved a five-year, \$1.34 million incentives deal to help TPA Group pay for infrastructure improvements associated with a massive warehouse project. Representatives of Cabarrus County Economic Development on Monday said the warehouse will be 1 million square feet and create at least 600 full-time jobs. The jobs would have an average yearly salary of more than \$31,000. Councilman Ryan Dayvault said it's a great day for the city of Kannapolis to even talk about such a project. "It's a great opportunity to add jobs to the base of our employment here, and I just am very happy to see us in the running for such projects," Dayvault said.(Josh Bergeron, THE SALISBURY POST, 7/11/17).

Asheville Mayor

One-term City Councilman Keith Young said he's "seriously considering" a run for mayor. Young, who was the top vote-getter in 2015 and whose four-year term doesn't end until 2019, told the Citizen-Times on Saturday he had not seriously thought about running for Asheville's top elected position until recently. "I've been asked by several individuals over two months now," he said. "I'm not sure how I feel about it," Young said, but added that he's now "seriously considering" a campaign.

If he runs, he would face incumbent Esther Manheimer who signed up on opening day of candidate filing Friday to run for a second term as mayor.

East West Asheville resident Jonathan Wainscott was the first to announce, saying months ago he would run for mayor. But as of late Friday afternoon, Wainscott had not created a campaign committee as required by state law and had not filed.

In 2015 Young got the most votes of six candidates vying for three council spots in an election not featuring a mayoral race. He spent the least money of any candidate. That made him the only black council member and the first African-American elected to the city's governing body since 2009.(Joel Burgess, ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, 7/10/11).

MLS Visit

Next week, the Triangle area will take one of its most important steps yet for its hopes of landing a Major League Soccer team. Mark Abbott, MLS president and deputy commissioner, will lead a group of MLS executives to meet with North Carolina F.C. leaders July 19, the soccer club announced in a press release Tuesday. The visit will include a public rally at City Market in downtown Raleigh, with local soccer fans getting the chance to show off their passion for the sport and desire for a top-tier team in front of MLS leaders.

The visit will also feature meetings between the MLS group and local government officials and business leaders, as well as a press conference when North Carolina F.C. leaders will give an update on plans to build a new soccer stadium. The club has not yet decided on a site to build the privately funded \$150 million, 22,000 seat stadium.

The MLS group is touring all 12 markets that have submitted bids for one of four MLS expansion slots this summer. It was announced Monday that MLS officials will also be visiting Charlotte.(Hank Tucker, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Confederate Flag

The Sons of Confederate Veterans and Captain C.F. Connor Camp have partnered to sponsor and fund the raising of a 20-by-30-foot Confederate flag on an 85-foot pole on N.C. Highway 16. The flag was raised July Fourth by a group of 70-80 volunteers and was planned for six months prior, SCV member Robert Smith said. "As they take down our monuments, this is a way we support and respect our Confederate ancestors," Smith said.

A string of Confederate monuments have been taken down in recent years, most notably in New Orleans through an ordinance signed by Mayor Mitch Landrieu.

Jerry McCombs, President of the Catawba County NAACP, shared his take on the new flag. "That's their right (to raise the flag). But if I had relatives in that war, and knowing that the war was about slavery, I would thank the people who fought, but would not support it," he said.

"History tells us that African-Americans were forced to fight in the Civil War," McCombs said. "We know what that flag is about, but if someone wants to put it up, it's their right."

The North Carolina division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans also released a statement regarding the raising of the flag. The N.C. 16 flag is the second of the "mega flags" raised as part of a "Flags Across the Carolinas" project. Several other sites are being considered across the state for additional Confederate flags, according to the release. (Max Seng, THE HICKORY RECORD, 7/11/17).

NC Business

North Carolina remains the No. 5 state in America for business, according to results of a study released Tuesday. It marks the second straight year the Tarheel state pulled the No. 5 spot in CNBC's annual countdown of "America's Top States for Business." Ten weighted scoring categories and 66 metrics were used for this year's ranking. The categories, in order of most weighted to least, are workforce, infrastructure, cost of doing business, economy, quality of life, technology and innovation, education, business friendliness, access to capital, and cost of living. North Carolina landed in the top-10 nationwide in cost of doing business (9), workforce (7), technology and innovation (6), business friendliness (8), and access to capital (9). Cuts in school spending, the report said, dropped North Carolina to 32nd for education and 28th for quality of life. (Aaron Moody, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/11/17).

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **Bold** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Friday, July 14

- **10 a.m. | The North Carolina General Statutes Commission, Partition Task Force, 510 W. Williams St., Apex.**

Thursday, Aug. 3

- Noon | House convenes in session.
- Noon | Senate convenes in session.

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Wednesday, July 12

- 9 a.m. | The state Consumer and Family Advisory Committee of DHHS meets, Biggs Dr., Raleigh.

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Security Training Conference meets, Conference Room B, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).

Thursday, July 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Friday, July 14

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Architecture hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, 127 W. Hargett St., #304, Raleigh.

Monday, July 17

- 11 a.m. | The Executive Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Tuesday, July 18

- 1:30 p.m. | The Accountability Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Wednesday, July 19

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Plant Conservation Board meets, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Watauga County Center Conference, Room 971 W. King St., Boone.

Thursday, July 20

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Tuesday, July 25

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Code Officials Qualification Board holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, 1st Floor Hearing Room, Room 131 (Albemarle Building), 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 1 p.m. | The Board Development Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Thursday, July 27

- 9 a.m. | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Monday, July 31

- 12 p.m. | The N.C. State Board of Elections hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, State Board of Elections Office, 441 N. Harrington St., Raleigh.

Tuesday, Aug. 1

- 12 p.m. | The UNC Board of Governors' Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs, Board Room of the Center for School Leadership Development, 140 Friday Center Dr., Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).

Thursday, Aug. 3

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).

Wednesday, Aug. 16

- 10:30 a.m. | The Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Wake Technical Community College-Public Safety Training Center, 321 Chapanoke Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Aug. 17

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 14

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 28

- 10:30 a.m. | The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries meets, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' Wilmington District Office, 127 North Cardinal Dr. Extension, Wilmington.

Thursday, Oct. 5

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Oct. 19

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 9

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 16

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 7

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Jan. 11

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources has a new name - the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. More Information: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/home>

Tuesday, July 18

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Fayetteville Technical Community College Cumberland Hall Auditorium at 2201 Hull Rd., Fayetteville.**

Thursday, July 20

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Nash Community College Brown Auditorium at 522 N. Old Carriage Road, Rocky Mount.**

Thursday, Aug. 3

- **2 p.m. | The state Department on Air Quality holds public hearing concerning incorporation of 2015 Ozone Ambient Standard and Readoption, 2145 Suttle Ave., Charlotte.**

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina
More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, July 17

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 24

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 31

- Staff Conference

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in BOLD**)
More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Thursday, July 13

- **3:30 p.m. | The UNC Board of Governors, Mountain View Conference Room of the Sherrill Center, University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville.**

Friday, July 14

- 9 a.m. | The UNC Board of Governors meets, Room 102, in the Reuter Center of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, Asheville.

Tuesday, Aug. 1

- 12 p.m. | The Board of Governors' Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs, Board Room of the Center for School Leadership Development, 140 Friday Center Dr., Chapel Hill.

Friday, Sept. 8

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Nov. 3

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Dec. 15

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Jan. 26, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, March 23, 2018

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Wednesday, July 12

- **9:30 a.m. | Gov. Roy Cooper makes economic development announcement, 2125 Senator Ralph Scott Parkway, Mebane.**

Sunday, July 30

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association host 81st Annual NC School of Banking, William & Ida Friday Center, UNC-Chapel Hill. The conference concludes on Aug. 4.

Friday, Sept. 8

- No Time Given | The 77th Annual National Folk Festival opens in Downtown Greensboro for its third year in the state. Contact: Kaitlin Smith, [336-373-7523](tel:336-373-7523), ext 246.

Sunday, Sept. 24

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Young Bankers Conference, Crowne Plaza Asheville Resort, Asheville.

Wednesday, Oct. 11

- 10 a.m. | The Carolinas Air Pollution Control Association hold Technical Workshop and Forum, Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort, 10000 Beach Club Dr., Myrtle Beach.

Monday, Nov. 6

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Women in Banking Conference, Renaissance Charlotte Southpark, 5501 Carnegie Blvd., Charlotte.

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